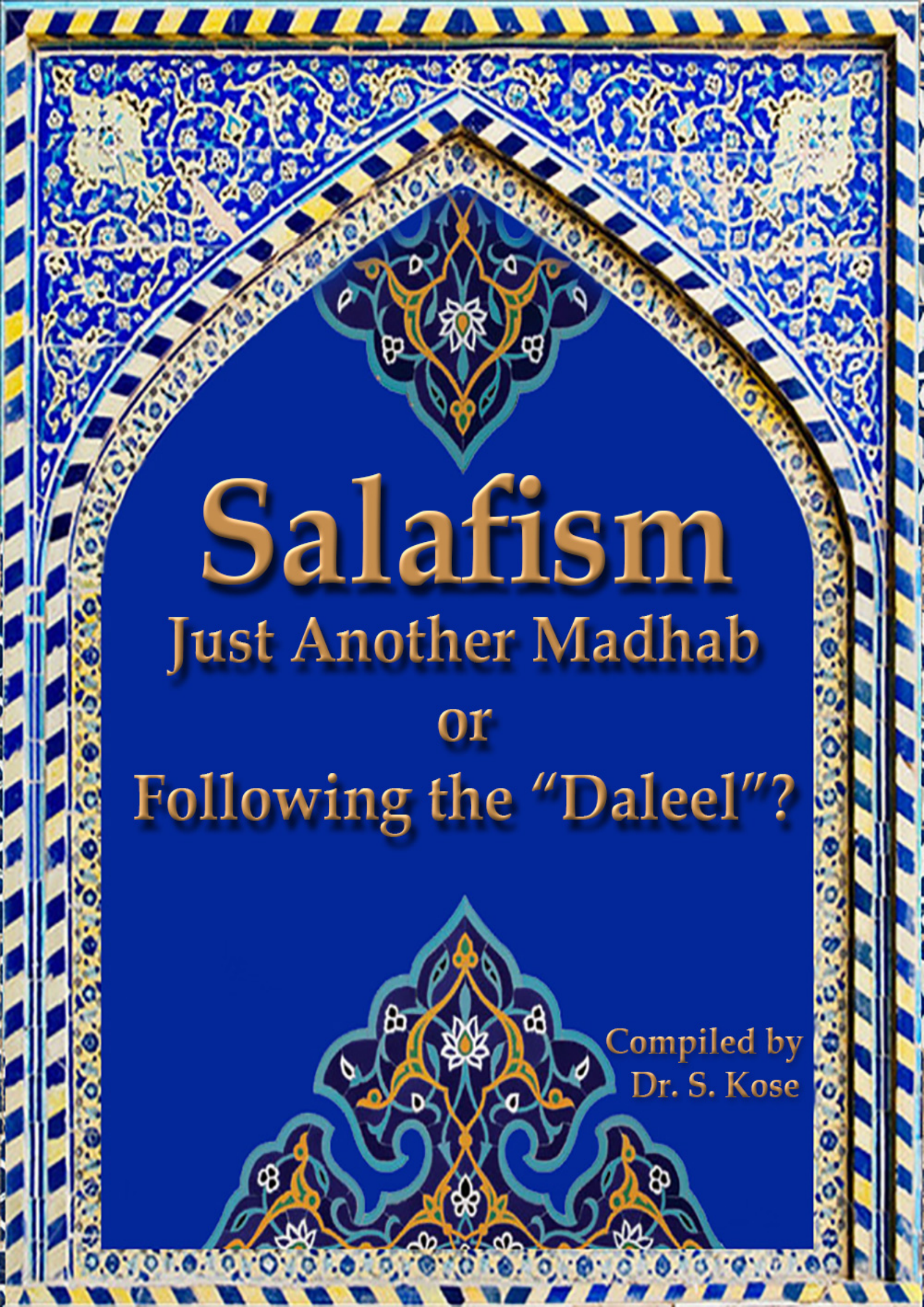




Salafism

Just Another Madhab
or
Following the “Daleel”?

Compiled by
Dr. S. Kose

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2016

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About the Booklet

Oftentimes we, the madhab followers, are confronted by those who describe themselves as Salafis, for not following *daleel* (evidence) but instead following a madhab. I have come across some who cannot even read a verse of the Qur'an without making serious mistakes, yet they claim to be able to interpret and follow the *daleel*. One wonders how can someone in such a state follow and interpret *daleel*? Through a series of exchanges and observations, I found them to be nothing more than blind imitators of the contemporary Salafi teachers. These very teachers claim to understand, interpret, and follow the *daleel* all while promoting anti-madhabism. At length, I came to realize that when a young man of utmost ignorance claims to follow the *daleel* instead of imitating an Imaam of a madhab, he is in fact insinuating that his Salafi teacher follows the *daleel* but the Imaams of the four madhabs don't. Thus, I wanted to find out to what extent the learned Salafis or the Salafi teachers themselves follow the *daleel* (evidence). What is meant by "following the *daleel*" is that a qualified scholar gathers, on a given subject, all the proofs and then derives a ruling following the thorough analysis of the complete body of evidence (*daleel*). This involves sifting through a quarter of a million hadith spread across more than three hundred hadith books as well as hundreds of volumes of books of each madhab.

One of the prominent Salafi teachers by the name of Shaykh Albani put it as follows:

"I examine the positions of the Imams¹ and their evidences for them, and then take the closest of them to the evidence of the Qur'an and Sunna"

Thus, if we find a learned Salafi giving fatwas without knowing the positions or the evidences of the Imams, he is betraying this principle.

I selected **three examples** from learned Salafis, including the owner of the above quotation, to demonstrate to the reader that in fact Salafi teachers do not adhere to their own principle. If they stopped at that, we would have said that is their choice. But they go on declaring some of the practices of the madhabs as INVALID or CONTRARY to the sunna without having looked at the evidences used by the madhabs.

So, if the Salafis themselves do not strictly follow the *daleel*, then why do they call the madhab followers to their way under the slogan of "Follow the *Daleel* from Qur'an and Sunna!"? I will attempt to answer this question at the end of the booklet God willing.

May Allah make this little effort a means by which the truth can be understood. All praise is due to Allah and may His peace and blessings be upon our master Muhammed, upon his family, his companions and upon those who follow in his footsteps until the day of judgment. Ameen!

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1 Later in the booklet, under the title "What Did The Imams Mean by "*If the hadith is authentic, it is my way*"", I listed a selection of the books of Hanafi madhab just to show the reader what it will take to examine the evidence of one madhab let alone four.

First Example

I took this example from Dr. Bouti's book called "**Anti-Madhabism: The Most Dangerous Innovation Threatening Islam**". It is a dialog between Dr. Bouti and Shaykh Albani. I will quote portions of Dr. Bouti's book before introducing the dialog in order to provide a background and a context so that the dialog can be better understood.

Why Anti-Madhabism was Written

Dr. Bouti relates on page 31 of *Ant-Madhabism*, the conversation that lead him to author the book as follows:

"One of the students of the Department of Literature at Damascus University came to me saying he started taking religion seriously and had commenced performing his worship regularly. He said that he studied a booklet on fiqh (jurisprudence) according to the School of Imaam Al-Shafii and now he worships in accordance with this school. He informed me that he came across a booklet³ which said:"

"It is not permissible for a Muslim to adhere strictly to any one of the four schools of thought (*mad-habs*) and that whosoever does this becomes a disbeliever and has gone astray from the straight path of Islam. What a Muslim is obliged to do is to take the rulings directly from the Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh)."

"The student went on to say that he is not even able to recite Qur'an correctly let alone understand the true meaning of the verses and the rulings contained therein. He concluded by asking "How can someone in his state be expected to derive the rulings directly from the sacred texts?"

Dr. Bouti says in so many words that he could not keep silent and let people do as they wish using laughable, absurd and insane evidence such as was done by the author of the booklet mentioned above.

Dr. Bouti says on page 13-14:

"I realized what distress many Muslims have been experiencing from those who are incessantly trying to sever our link with the four schools of thought and the trustworthy Imams. The majority of those who suffer are ordinary Muslims who have sound judgment by which they realize that the call of the anti-madhabists is steeped in falsehood and this call cannot sit well in the heart of the conscious believers. Hence, the Muslims look up to those who can equip them with evidences and a moderate criteria of judgment and they are in a dire need of a concise book that will help them counter the [deception of anti-madhabism]."

Thus, Dr. Bouti decides to write one of his masterpieces called "*Anti-Madhabism: The Most Dangerous Innovation Threatening Islam*". May Allah reward him and have mercy on him for this excellent work.

About the Transcript of the Dialog

Dr. Bouti says on page 13:

"My Lord knows that I never attributed to anyone anything that they did not say. All I quoted in this book from the discussion that took place between me and one of those [anti-madhabists], is reproduced without changing anything except what was said using colloquial language is converted into classical Arabic."

About the Dialog

Dr. Bouti says on pages 15-22"

"[With respect to my discussion with Al-Albani] the gist of it is that Shaykh Al-Albani expressed interest

2 *Al-Lamadhabiyya: Akhtar al-Binatin Tuhaddid al-Sharia Al-Islamiyya*

3 The student is referring to the booklet by Al-Khajandi titled "Is a Muslim Obligated to Strictly Follow One of the Four *Madhabs*?"

4 *Al-Lamadhabiyya: Akhtar al-Binatin Tuhaddid al-Sharia Al-Islamiyya*

in meeting with me to share his views of my book. We met and I listened to his remarks and views which can be summarized in two points:

First, he found the title of my book inappropriate; In his view, I did not provide the necessary proof that would support the claim that 'Anti-Madhabism is the most dangerous innovation threatening Islam'. He even found my title dangerous.

Second, in his view, I refuted the booklet by Al-Khajandi but did not understand it well. According to Shaykh Nasir, Al- Khajandi does not deny the importance of the schools of thoughts (*madhabs*) nor their origin or development. Nor does he deny the validity of following these schools for the one who is not a jurist (*ijtihad*). What he opposes is the strict partisanship to a school [in every issue] ignoring the evidence which one (a jurist, not a regular person) understands and comprehends. This statement was the only point that Shykh Nasir and I agreed upon [I do not agree that this was also Al-Khajandi's view] and all that happened [during the 3 hours] was a waste of time.

I told him in regards to his first concern that my book is full of proof supporting the veracity of its title. One of the most important points that I wanted to clarify in my book is that both the Muslims at the time of the companions and the followers who came after them who were not jurists (ie *mujtahid*-they have the qualification to derive rulings directly from Qur'an and Sunna) themselves in fact followed a jurist. They had the option to strictly follow one Imaam (jurist) for life or switch to another Imaam. There were some companions who were only content with the verdicts of Ibn Abbas (ra) and they would not ask anyone else for verdicts. No researcher ever uncovered any statement from any of the companions that this was an unacceptable practice. The people of Iraq followed the school of Ibn Masood (ra) for a long time either taking their religion directly from him or his students and yet no one among the scholars ever rebuked them for this "blind" following. In the same way, the people in Hijaz adhered to the verdicts of Ibn Omar (ra) and his students and companions for a long time yet again no scholar ever admonished them for this practice. In Mecca, Ataa bin Abi Rabaah and Mujahid were the sole issuers of legal verdicts for a long time such that the Caliph issued a declaration that no one besides these two were allowed to issues legal verdicts yet no scholars among the followers ever blamed or opposed the Caliph for [forcing people to "blindly" follow only these two scholars].

After all of this, wouldn't the statement that "a strict following of a particular Imaam's school of thought is a blameworthy innovation" be a baseless claim of falsehood? Isn't this none other than anti-madhabism⁵?"

5 [Dr. Bouti]The issue can be further clarified as follows: Madhabism means that an ordinary person or the one who has not reached the level of a jurist (*mujtahid*) imitates an Imaam by following his school all his life or switches from one school to another after a while.

Anti-Madhabism means neither the ordinary people nor those who are still not at level of a jurist (*mujtahid*) have to follow an Imaam neither strictly nor otherwise. This definition is what is understood linguistically speaking as well as technically speaking among the specialists. If you say for example someone is a partisan, it is understood that he is associated with a group irrespective of if he has been with the same group all his life or if he was transferred recently. Except that Shaykh Nasir argues that this is not what every Muslim understands from this word.

I don't understand why this man keeps thinking that everyone must understand in the same way that he [Shaykh Nasir] understands and that his conclusion is the yardstick for what is truth and whatever is in contradiction with his understanding must be rejected by all?! He did not know the meaning of the words madhabism and anti-madhabism in the way that I explained during the discussion I had with him, yet he expected every Muslim to understand those two words as he understood.

He also argues that my book is invalid because I stick to the above definition and that no Muslims be they followers of a school of thought or not will agree with me, thus my book talks about an imaginary, non-existent concept.

We wish to guide them back to the straight path of Islam, but none accepts abiding by any of the four imams. Rather they all claimed that everyone must make his own rulings directly from the Quran and Sunna (as he sees fit). Frequently we see even illiterates refusing to accept the verdicts of any of the four Imaams until we disclose the evidence of the Imaam, and the hadith that the Imaam relied upon then we are expected to explain to him the authenticity of the hadith and its chain all the way down to the analysis of the individual narrators as if he himself is an expert in the field of science of chains of transmitters and science of criticism and authentication. Only then will this illiterate decide whether the Imaam was right or he will cross

As for what is between me and him [Al-Albani] regarding the second point, stems from his abominable interpretation of what is in my book of the truth.

Al-Khajandi says: “As for the [four] schools, they are the collection of the opinions of the scholars that neither Allah the Exalted nor His Prophet (pbuh) ordered anyone to follow.” This statement of Al-Khajandi, according to Shaykh Nasir, is directed to those who have reached to the level of a jurist (*mujtahid*) and these are the people referred to by the word “anyone”.

Al-Khajandi says: “: “Mastering this way –that is extracting the rulings directly from the Qur’an and Sunna- is easy and doesn’t require more than Al-Muwatta, the two authentics of Bukhari and Muslim, Sunan Abi Dawood, Jami’ al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasai. These books are known and famous (easily accessible). One can master them in no time. You must learn them. If you are unable and you know a brother who has already studied them, you should have him teach you these books. Thereafter, you will have no excuse [not to draw your own rulings].” Once again, according to Shaykh Nasir, the above statement is directed towards those who have the prerequisites of issuing legal verdicts (*ijtihad*) and thus Al-Khajandi’s statement is, according to the Shaykh, is correct and needs no further response or exegesis.

Al-Khajandi further says: “If there are multiple narrations from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) regarding some matters and you don’t know the chronological order of the narrations, then you must act according to one sometime and according to other some other time [this way you will have practiced according to all narrations].”

Al-Khajandi says: “When one finds a Qur’anic text, prophetic tradition or statements of the companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), one must take it. One cannot turn to the opinions of the scholars in this case.” According to Shaykh Nasir, this is for people who have studied the fundamentals of the Islamic law whereby they understand the types and various uses of the proofs or evidences.

And so on...

Thus, all that is found in the booklet of Al-Khajandi in terms of statements similar to those just quoted, must be interpreted, according to Shaykh Nasir, to coincide with the truth that we have stated. He was of the opinion that we should interpret Al-Khajandi’s book in a way that is acceptable by making specializations as necessary. I told him that none of our scholars make absolute statements like these then expect the reader to understand other than what his words mean. Furthermore, no one understands or interprets Al-Khajandi’s statements like you do. His response was: “This man is from Bukhara and Arabic is not his

Imaam’s verdict out as mistake.

These people are not martians or from another planet. Rather they are the children of Adam (as) that people of every locality, every city and every village complain about. They are not so few in numbers and Shaykh Nasir is proud of them.

Shaykh Nasir calls Al-Khajandi a great scholar and describes his book as beneficial. [Let’s listen to what Al-Khajandi says in his so called beneficial book]: Al-Khajandi says: “Mastering this way –that is extracting the rulings directly from the Qur’an and Sunna- is easy and doesn’t require more than Al-Muwatta, the two authentics of Bukhari and Muslim, Sunan Abi Dawood, Jami’ al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasai. These books are known and famous (easily accessible). One can master them in no time. You must learn them. If you are unable and you know a brother who has already studied them, you should have him teach you these books. Thereafter, you will have no excuse [not to draw your own rulings].” He further says: “If there are multiple narrations from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) regarding some matters and you don’t know the chronological order of the narrations, then you must act according to one sometime and according to other some other time [this way you will have practiced according to all narrations].”

Do you find, dear reader, in the above statement any sign of respect for following four schools? Yet when we pointed the anti-madhabist tone of Al-Khajandi’s view out to Shaykh Nasir, he disagreed with our interpretation and said that all people are madhabists.

Does not Al-Khajandi block the way for people to follow the *madhabs* when places in front of them the famous Al-Muwatta, the two authentics of Bukhari and Muslim, Sunan Abi Dawood, Jami’ al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasai and says that these books can be mastered in no time in that Allah Almighty saved the believers from having to imitating the *madhabs* either one of them or some of them.

Shaykh Nasir may very well know that all the great scholars including Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim and al-Shawkani will tell you that mastering the above books does not make one *mujtahid* (independent jurist) and that one cannot depend solely on these books in deriving the verdicts. Rather, one must have mastered other prerequisite sciences in order to reach a level of expertise required for a *mujtahid*. This is in total contradiction to what Al-Khajandi says in his booklet, which, according to Shaykh Nasir, is a beneficial book.

mother tongue thus he is not able to express himself like an Arab would in Arabic. In addition he has already passed away –and he is a Muslim- we must think well of him and interpret his words in a way that is acceptable in Islam.”

This is a summary of what happened between me and Shaykh Nasir during the 3 hour meeting which was recorded.

He sent me a letter later on suggesting that we meet again. I wrote to him back saying:

“As for your suggestion that we meet again, I noticed during the first meeting , as I told you, that we did not benefit from it at all. Neither you changed your views regarding the innocence of Al-Khajandi, nor was I convinced that you have any grounds to stand on in the way that you interpreted his words. I think that if you showed a quarter of the tolerance to Shaykh Muhyiddeen bin Arabi that you show to Al-Khajandi in interpreting his words, you would not have declared Ibn Arabi a disbeliever or perverted transgressor.

In any case, yesterday all you did was defend Al-Khajandi and indicate that his words must be understood as you understand them and that I am not interpreting his words correctly.

Whether Al-Khajandi meant what you understood or what the rest of the world would understand from his words, I am happy to know that you disagree with the conclusions that I draw from Al-Khajandi's words. I would be happy if you would write a commentary on Khajandi's book and explain to the people what he really meant and publicize your respect for the four Imams and that in your view those who have not reached the level of *ijtihad* must follow one of the [four] schools.

As for the meeting you are proposing, I don't see any benefit coming out of it. From our meeting yesterday I learned one thing; that is, I wasted 3 hours that I could have used to do some beneficial work. Sincerely yours!”

Dr. Bouti says:

“Thereafter the proponents of anti-madhabism spread falsehood regarding the discussion that took place between me and Shaykh Nasir. They are of no value that I should respond to them or comment on them. I hope all that I have done in this regard was purely to serve the religion of Islam and I don't expect any reward from anyone other than the Lord of the Worlds (Exalted in Might). Therefore, let the liars say about me what they wish.

I would like to dwell on one of the lies that they spread to show the reader the truth. That is they claimed that my respected father, may Allah preserve him, who was present during part of the discussion, agreed with Shaykh Nasir and disapproved of my refusal of his views.

I should not keep quiet about this scandalous news otherwise they will use this to deceive the common people to legitimize their misguidance claiming that the jurist of Damascus (my father) Al-Shaykh Molla Ramadan agreed with and supported the most prominent proponent of anti-madhabism.

Because of this, may father, may Allah preserve him, asked me to make it clear to the reader that their claim is no more than a slanderous lie. The recording of our discussion serves as the best witness to this fact. At the end of this introduction⁶, the reader will find my father's disclaimer with his signature.”

The Dialog⁷

Bouti⁸: “What is your method for understanding the rulings of Allah? Do you take them from the Qur'an and Sunna, or from the Imams of independent *ijtihad*?”

Albani: “I examine the positions of the Imams and their evidences for them, and then take the closest of them to the evidence of the Qur'an and Sunna⁹.”

6 Not included in this booklet. Please see the Al-Lamdhabyiyya (pages 27-28)

7 The dialog was translated from Arabic by Shaykh Nuh Ha Mim Keller who described it as “a conversation that took place in Damascus between Shari'a professor Muhammad Sa'id al-Bouti, and a Salafi teacher”

8 Al-Lamdhabyiyya (pages 134-148)

9 This is the advertised principle of the modern Salafis including Shaykh Al-Albani himself. Let's read

Bouti: “You have five thousand Syrian pounds that you have saved for six months. You then buy merchandise and begin trading with it. When do you pay zakat on the merchandise, after six months, or after one year?”

Albani: [He¹⁰ thought, and said,] “Your question implies you believe zakat should be paid on business capital.”

Bouti: “I am just asking. You should answer in your own way. Here in front of you is a library containing books of Qur’anic exegesis, hadith, and the works of the *mujtahid* Imams.”

Albani: [He reflected for a moment, then said,] “Brother, this is deen, and not simple matter. One could answer from the top of one’s head, but it would require thought, research, and study; all of which take time. And we have come to discuss something else.”

Bouti: I dropped the question and said, “All right. Is it obligatory for every Muslim to examine the evidences for the positions of the Imams, and adopt the closest of them to the Qur’an and Sunna?”

Albani: “Yes.”

Bouti: “This means that all people possess the same capacity for *ijtihad* that the Imams of the *madhhabs* have; or even greater, since without a doubt, anyone who can judge the positions of the Imams and evaluate them according to the measure of the Qur’an and sunna must know more than all of them.”

Albani: [He said,] “In reality, people are of three categories: the *muqallid* or ‘follower of qualified scholarship without knowing the primary textual evidence (of Qur’an and hadith)’; the *muttabi*’, or ‘follower of primary textual evidence’; and the *mujtahid*, or scholar who can deduce rulings directly from the primary textual evidence (*ijtihad*). He who compares between *madhhabs* and chooses the closest of them to the Qur’an is a *muttabi*’, a follower of primary textual evidence, which is an intermediate degree between following scholarship (*taqlid*) and deducing rulings from primary texts (*ijtihad*).”

Bouti: “Then what is the follower of scholarship (*muqallid*) obliged to do?”

Albani: “To follow the *mujtahid* he agrees with.”

Bouti: “Is there any difficulty in his following one of them, adhering to him, and not changing?”

Albani: “Yes there is. It is unlawful (*haram*).”

Bouti: “What is the proof that it is unlawful?”

Albani: “The proof is that he is obliging himself to do something Allah Mighty and Majestic has not obligated him to.”

Bouti: I said, “Which of the seven canonical readings (*qira’at*) do you recite the Qur’an in?”

Albani: “That of Hafs.”

Bouti: “Do you recite only in it, or in a different canonical reading each day.”

on to see if he keeps his word and stays faithful to this principle!

10 Please note that the dialog is narrated by Dr. Bouti and so what is in square braces is his narrative.

Albani: “No, I recite only in it.”

Bouti: “Why do you read only it when Allah Mighty and Majestic has not obliged you to do anything except to recite the Qur’an as it has been conveyed—with the total certainty of *tawatur* (being conveyed by witnesses so numerous at every stage of transmission that their sheer numbers obviate the possibility of forgery or alteration), from the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)?”

Albani: “Because I have not had a opportunity to study other canonical readings, or recite the Qur’an except in this way.”

Bouti: “But the individual who learns the fiqh of the Shafi’i school—he too has not been able to study other *madhhabs* or had the opportunity to understand the rules of his religion except from this Imam. So if you say that he must know all the *ijtihad*s of the Imams so as to go by all of them, it follows that you too must learn all the canonical readings so as to recite in all of them. And if you excuse yourself because you cannot, you should excuse him also. In any case, what I say is: where did you get that it is obligatory for a follower of scholarship (*muqallid*) to keep changing from one *madhhab* to another, when Allah has not obliged him to? That is, just as he is not obliged to adhere to a particular *madhhab*, neither is he obliged to keep changing.”

Albani: “What is unlawful for him is adhering to one while believing that Allah has commanded him to do so.”

Bouti: “That is something else, and is true without a doubt and without any disagreement among scholars. But is there any problem with his following a particular mujtahid, knowing that Allah has not obliged him to do that?”

Albani: “There is no problem.”

Bouti: [Al-Khajnadi’s] book, which you teach from, contradicts you. It says this is unlawful, in some places actually asserting that someone who adheres to a particular Imam and no other is an unbeliever (*kafir*).”

Albani: [He said,] “Where?” [and then began looking at the book, considering its texts and expressions, reflecting on the words of the author] “Whoever follows one of them in particular in all questions is a blind, imitating, mistaken bigot, and is “among those who have divided their religion and are parties” [Qur’an 30:32]. [He said,] “By follows, he means someone who believes it legally obligatory for him to do so. The wording is a little incomplete.”

Bouti: [I said,] “What evidence is there that that’s what he meant? Why don’t you just say the author was mistaken?”

Albani: He insisted that the expression was correct, that it should be understood as containing an unexpressed condition [i.e. “provided one believes it is legally obligatory”], and he exonerated the writer from any mistake in it.

Bouti: [I said,] “But interpreted in this fashion, the expression does not address any opponent or have any significance. Not a single Muslim is unaware that following such and such a particular Imam is not legally obligatory. No Muslim does so except from his own free will and choice.”

Albani: “How should this be, when I hear from many common people and some scholars that it is legally obligatory to follow one particular school, and that a person may not change to another?”

Bouti: “Name one person from the ordinary people or scholars who said that to you.” He said nothing, and seemed surprised that what I said could be true, and kept repeating that he had thought that many people considered it unlawful to change from one *madhhab* to another. I said, “You won’t find anyone today who believes this misconception, though it is related from the latter times of the Ottoman period that they considered a Hanafi changing from his own school to another to be an enormity. And without a doubt, if true, this was something that was complete nonsense from them; a blind, hateful bigotry.”

I then said, “Where did you get this distinction between the *muqallid* “follower of scholarship” and the *muttabi* “follower of evidence”: Is there a original, lexical distinction [in the Arabic language], or is it merely terminological?”

Albani: “There is a lexical difference.”

Bouti: I brought him lexicons with which to establish the lexical difference between the two words, and he could not find anything. I then said: “Abu Bakr (Allah be well pleased with him) said to a desert Arab who had objected to the allotment for him agreed upon by the Muslims, ‘If the Emigrants accept, you are but followers’—using the word “followers” (*tabi*) to mean ‘without any prerogative to consider, question, or discuss.’” (Similar to this is the word of Allah Most High, “When those who were followed (*uttubi*’u) disown those who followed (*attaba*’u) upon seeing the torment, and their relations are sundered” (Qur’an 2:166), which uses follow (*ittiba*’) for the most basic blind imitation).

Albani: [He said,] “Then let it be a technical difference: don’t I have a right to establish a terminological usage?”

Bouti: “Of course. But this term of yours does not alter the facts. This person you term a *muttabi* (follower of scholarly evidence) will either be an expert in evidences and the means of textual deduction from them, in which case he is a *mujtahid*. Or, if not an expert or unable to deduce rulings from them, then he is *muqallid* (follower of scholarly conclusions). And if he is one of these on some questions, and the other on others, then he is a *muqallid* for some and a *mujtahid* for others. In any case, it is an either-or distinction, and the ruling for each is clear and plain.”

Albani: [He said,] “The *muttabi*’ is someone able to distinguish between scholarly positions and the evidences for them, and to judge one to be stronger than others. This is a level different to merely accepting scholarly conclusions.

Bouti: “If you mean,” I said, “by distinguishing between positions differentiating them according to the strength or weakness of the evidence, this is the highest level of *ijtihad*. Are you personally able to do this?”

Albani: “I do so as much as I can.”

Bouti: “I am aware,” I said, “that you give as a fatwas that a three fold pronouncement of divorce on a single occasion only counts as one time. Did you check, before this fatwa of yours, the positions of the Imams and their evidences on this, then differentiate between them, so to give the fatwa accordingly? Now, ‘Uwaymir al-‘Ajlan pronounced a three fold divorce at one time in the presence of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) after he had made public imprecation against her for adultery (*li’an*), saying, ‘If I retain her, O Messenger of Allah, I will have lied against her: she is [hereby] thrice divorced.’ What do you know about this hadith and its relation to this question, and its bearing as evidence for the position of the scholarly majority [that a threefold divorce pronounced on a single occasion is legally finalized and binding] as opposed to the position of Ibn Taymiya [that a threefold divorce on a single occasion only counts as once]?”

Albani: "I did not know this hadith."

Bouti: "Then how could you give a fatwa on this question that contradicts what the four *madhhabs* unanimously concur upon, without even knowing their evidence, or how strong or weak it was? Here you are, discarding the principle you say you have enjoined on yourself and mean to enjoin on us, the principle of "following scholarly evidence (ittiba'") in the meaning you have terminologically adopted."

Albani: "At the time I didn't own enough books to review the positions of the Imams¹¹ and their evidence."

Bouti: "Then what made you rush into giving a fatwa contravening the vast majority of Muslims, when you hadn't even seen any of their evidences?"

Albani: "What else could I do? I was asked and I only had a limited amount of scholarly resources."

Bouti: "You could have done what all scholars and Imams have done; namely, say "I didn't know," or told the questioner the position of both the four *madhhabs* and the position of those who contravene them; without giving a fatwa for either side. You could have done this, or rather, this was what was obligatory for you, especially since the problem was not personally yours so as to force you to reach some solution or another. As for your giving a fatwa contradicting the consensus (ijma') of the four Imams without knowing—by your own admission—their evidences, sufficing yourself with the agreement in your heart for the evidences of the opposition, this is the very utmost of the kind of bigotry you accuse us of."

Albani: "I read the Imams' opinions in [*Nayl al-awtar*, by] Shawkani, *Subul al-salam* [by al-Amir al-San'ani], and *Fiqh al-sunna* by Sayyid Sabiq."

Bouti: These are the books of the opponents of the four Imams on this question. All of them speak from one side of the question, mentioning the proofs that buttress their side. Would you be willing to judge one litigant on the basis of his words alone, and that of his witnesses and relatives?"

Albani: I see nothing blameworthy in what I have done. I was obliged to give the questioner an answer, and this was as much as I was able to reach with my understanding."

Bouti: "You say you are a "follower of scholarly evidence (*muttabi*)" and we should all be likewise. You have explained "following evidence" as reviewing the positions of all *madhhabs*, studying their evidences, and adopting the closest of them to the correct evidence—while in doing what you have done, you have discarded the principle completely. You know that the unanimous consensus of the four *madhhabs* is that a threefold pronouncement of divorce on one occasion counts as a three fold, finalized divorce, and you know that they have evidences for this that you are unaware of, despite which you turn from their consensus to the opinion that your personal preference desires. Were you certain beforehand that the evidence of the four Imams deserved to be rejected?"

Albani: No; but I wasn't aware of them, since I didn't have any reference works on them."

Bouti: "Then why didn't you wait? Why rush into it, when Allah never obligated you to do anything of the sort? Was your not knowing the evidences of the scholarly majority a proof that Ibn Taymiya

¹¹ What a lame excuse for someone whose advertised principle is "to examine the positions of the Imams and their evidences for them, and then take the closest of them to the evidence of the Qur'an and Sunna"!!! Could he not walk into just about any bookstore and take a look at one of the basic books of the *madhhabs*? Or could he not locate it in the library that supposedly he spent countless hours? Dr. Bouti, through his genius, exposed Shaykh Al-Albani as someone who betrays his own principle and is not honest about the methodology (if any) he follows. If the leader of the modern Sufis is unable to fulfill this principle, what about the ordinary people or even the graduates of a 4-year Sharia school?

was right? Is the bigotry you wrongly accuse us of anything besides this?"

Albani: "I read evidences in the books available to me that convinced me. Allah has not enjoined me to do more than that."

Bouti: "If a Muslim sees a proof for something in a the books he reads, is that a sufficient reason to disregard the *madhhabs* that contradict his understanding, even if he doesn't know their evidences?"

Albani: "It is sufficient."

Bouti: "A young man, newly religious, without any Islamic education, reads the word of Allah Most High "To Allah belongs the place where the sun rises and where it sets: wherever you turn, there is the countenance of Allah. Verily, Allah is the All-encompassing, the All-knowing (Qur'an 2:115), and gathers from it that a Muslim may face any direction he wishes in his prescribed prayers, as the apparent meaning of the verse implies. But he has heard that the four Imams unanimously concur upon the necessity of his facing towards the Kaaba, and he knows they have evidences for it that he is unaware of. What should he do when he wants to pray? Should he follow his conviction from the evidence available to him, or follow the Imam who unanimously concur on the contrary of what he has understood?"

Albani: "He should follow his conviction."

Bouti: "And pray towards the east for example. And his prayer would be legally valid?"

Albani: "Yes. He is morally responsible for following his personal conviction."

Bouti: "What if his personal conviction leads him to believe there is no harm in making love to his neighbor's wife, or to fill his belly with wine, or wrongfully take others' property: will all this be mitigated in Allah's reckoning by "personal conviction"?"

Albani: [He was silent for a moment, then said,] "Anyway, the examples you ask about are all fantasies that do not occur."

Bouti: "They are not fantasies; how often the like of them occurs, or even stranger. A young man without any knowledge of Islam, its Book, its sunna, who happens to hear or read this verse by chance, and understands from it what any Arab would from its outward purport, that there is no harm in someone praying facing any direction he wants—despite seeing people's facing towards the Kaaba rather than any other direction. This is an ordinary matter, theoretically and practically, as long as there are those among Muslims who don't know a thing about Islam. In any event, you have pronounced upon this example—imaginary or real—a judgment that is not imaginary, and have judged "personal conviction" to be the decisive criterion in any event. This contradicts your differentiating people into three groups: followers of scholars without knowing their evidence (*muqallidin*), followers of scholars' evidence (*muttabi'in*), and *mujtahids*."

Albani: "Such a person is obliged to investigate. Didn't he read any hadith, or any other Qur'anic verse?"

Bouti: He didn't have any reference works available to him, just as you didn't have any when you gave your fatwa on the question of [threefold] divorce. And he was unable to read anything other than this verse connected with facing the *qibla* and its obligatory character. Do you still insist that he must follow his personal conviction and disregard the Imams' consensus?"

Albani: "Yes. If he is unable to evaluate and investigate further, he is excused, and it is

enough for him to rely on the conclusions his evaluation and investigation lead him to.”

Bouti: “I intend to publish these remarks as yours. They are dangerous, and strange.”

Albani: “Publish whatever you want. I’m not afraid.”

Bouti: “How should you be afraid of me, when you are not afraid of Allah Mighty and Majestic, utterly discarding by these words the word of Allah Mighty and Majestic [in Sura al-Nahl] ‘Ask those who recall if you know not’ (Qur’an 16:43).”

Albani: “My brother,” [he said,] “These Imams are not divinely protected from error (*ma’sum*). As for the Quranic verse that this person followed [in praying any direction], it is the word of Him Who Is Protected from All Error, may His glory be exalted. How should he leave the divinely protected and attach himself to the tail of the non-divinely-protected?”

Bouti: “Good man, what is divinely protected from error is the true meaning that Allah intended by saying, “To Allah belongs the place where the sun rises and where it sets . . .”—not the understanding of the young man who is as far as can be from knowing Islam, its rulings, and the nature of its Qur’an. That is to say, the comparison I am asking you to make is between two understandings: the understanding of this ignorant youth, and the understanding of the *mujtahid* Imams, neither of which is divinely protected from error, but one of which is rooted in ignorance and superficiality, and the other of which is rooted in investigation, knowledge, and accuracy.”

Albani: “Allah does not make him responsible for more than his effort can do.”

Bouti: “Then answer me this question. A man has a child who suffers from some infections, and is under the care of all the doctors in town, who agree he should have a certain medicine, and warn his father against giving him an injection of penicillin, and that if he does, he will be exposing the child’s life to destruction. Now, the father knows from having read a medical publication that penicillin helps in cases of infection. So he relies on his own knowledge about it, disregards the advice of the doctors since he doesn’t know the proof for what they say, and employing instead his own personal conviction, treats the child with a penicillin injection, and thereafter the child dies. Should such a person be tried, and is he guilty of a wrong for what he did, or not?”

Albani: [He thought for a moment and then said,] “This is not the same as that.”

Bouti: “It is exactly the same. The father has heard the unanimous judgment of the doctors, just as the young man has heard the unanimous judgment of the Imams. One has followed a single text he read in a medical publication, the other has followed a single text he has read in the Book of Allah Mighty and and Majestic. This one has gone by personal conviction, and so has that.”

Albani: “Brother, the Qur’an is light. Light. In its clarity as evidence, is light like any other words?”

Bouti: “And the light of the Qur’an is reflected by anyone who looks into it or recites it, such that he understands it as light, as Allah meant it? Then what is the difference between those who recall [Qur’an 16:43] and anyone else, as long as all partake of this light? Rather, the two above examples are comparable, there is no difference between them at all; you must answer me: does the person investigating—in each of the two examples—follow his personal conviction, or does he follow and imitate specialists?”

Albani: “Personal conviction is the basis.”

Bouti: “He used personal conviction, and it resulted in the death of the child. Does this entail any responsibility, moral or legal?”

Albani: “It doesn’t entail any responsibility at all.”

Bouti: I said, “Then let us end the investigation and discussion on this last remark of yours, since it closes the way to any common ground between you and me on which we can base a discussion. It is sufficient that with this bizarre answer of yours, you have departed from the consensus of the entire Islamic religion. By Allah, there is no meaning on the face of the earth for disgusting bigotry if it is not what you people have” (pages 134-148).

Bouti concludes the story by saying: I do not know then, why these people don’t just let us be, to use our own “personal conviction” that someone ignorant of the rules of religion and the proofs for them must adhere to one of the *mujtahid* Imams, imitating him because of the latter’s being more aware than himself of the Book of Allah and sunna of His messenger. Whatever the mistake in this opinion in their view let it be given the general amnesty of “personal conviction.” like the example of him who turns his back to the *qibla* and is his prayer is valid, or him who kills a child and the killing is “*ijtihad*” and “medical treatment” (page 148).

Was Shaykh Albani Faithful to his Declared Principle?

During the dialog with Dr. Bouti, Shaykh Al-Albani advertised his methodology as such:

“I examine the positions of the Imams and their evidences for them, and then take the closest of them to the evidence of the Qur’an and Sunna.”

Yet, several minutes into the dialog, we saw that even though Shaykh Al-Albani had issued a fatwa regarding divorce, he admitted that he wasn’t familiar with the hadith used by the four *madhabs*. In this case, it was the same hadith that all four *madhabs* relied upon. This means had Shaykh Al-Albani checked out the books of any of the four schools, he would have known about this hadith. We find that those who follow in the footsteps of Shaykh Al-Albani betray this very principle again and again.

Second Example

The second example has to do with the timing of the morning prayer (*fajr*) according to the Hanafi school. A certain Shaykh said during his [program](#) on Huda¹² tv:

“In the Hanafi *madhab*, they tend to delay the *fajr* until it is a little bit light before sunrise of course... This is against the majority of the scholars and this is against the sunna of the Prophet (pbuh).”

This Shaykh declared the Hanafi practice, in no uncertain terms, as contrary to the sunnah. But, what evidence do the Hanafis use for this practice? I checked out the most basic of the Hanafi books such as al-Ikhtiar (volume 1 page 44) and I found that the Hanafi scholars based their view on ahadith narrated by al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja, Al-Tabarani and Imam Ahmad.

If you look at Jami’ al-Tirmidhi, you will see chapter 117 called “Narrations about delaying the *fajr* until it starts to get lighter (باب ما جاء في الاسفار بالفجر)”. al-Tirmidhi narrates a hadith (number 154) on the authority of Rabi’ bin Khadeej who said:

“I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: “Delay the *fajr* towards the end of its time [when it starts to get lighter] for there is more reward”.

Al-Tirmidhi goes on to say that this hadith was also narrated by Shoba and [Sufyaan] al-Thawri from Muhammed bin Ishaq. It is also narrated by Muhammed bin Ajlaan on the authority of Aasim bin

12 After having seen quite few of their programs spreading falsehood, I wonder if the Huda (**guidance**) tv is an appropriate name for this channel.

Omar bin Qatada. There are also other ahadith regarding this subject from Abu Barza Al-Aslami, Jaabir and Bilal. al-Tirmidhi said this is a **fair and authentic hadith** (*haadha hadithun hasanun saheeh*).

Imaam Anwar Shah Kashmiri has more to say on this subject in his commentary on Jami' al-Tirmidhy called "Al-Urf al-Shadhy" on page 177 of volume 1. It can be found [here](#).

In addition, Al-Hafidz al-Suyuti al-Shafii included the above hadith of al-Tirmidhi among the **mutawatir**¹³ hadith (unanimously authentic) in his booklet called "Al-Azhaar al-Mutanathira fi al-ahadith al-mutawatira" as was recorded by the author of I'ila al-Sunan volume 2 page 24. His brilliant research can be found [here](#).

In summary, the Hanafi scholars' point of view is based on multiple narrations (see Nasb al-Raya of Hafidz al-Zaylai volume 1 pages 304-313 for more details.):

1. Hadith of Rabi' bin Khadeej narrated by al-Tirmidhy. He declared it a **fair and authentic hadith** (*haadha hadithun hasanun saheeh*). Al-Hafidz al-Zaylai, Al-Muhaqqiq al-Kamal bin Al-Humaam agreed with al-Tirmidhy. Al-Hafidz Al-Suyuti declared this hadith **mutawatir** (unanimously authentic).
2. Al-Nasai narrated a hadith similar in meaning and he did not comment on its authenticity. Al-Hafidz Al-Zaylai declared the chain **authentic** (I'ila al-Sunan volume 2 page 24-25)

Now, how can someone declare a practice based on a **mutawatir** (unanimously authentic) and a **saheeh** (authentic) hadith (not to mention the rest of the evidence) to be against the sunnah? Even if the Shaykh believes that hadith is not **mutawatir** but only **authentic** (*saheeh*), I still cannot fathom how a "Shaykh" would dismiss all of the above evidence and label the Hanafi practice as "contrary to sunnah." Just like his teacher, this Shaykh never even bothered to glance over the Hanafi books before he gave his fatwa. One wonders if these people really believe it themselves wholeheartedly when they say they are following the *daleel* (evidence). How can someone claim they are following the daleel when time and time again we see that they do not collect all the evidence in a given subject before they make up their minds? They are either delusional or dishonest. I cannot think of a third possibility, can you?

Third Example

The third example has to do with the way the *witr* prayer is performed according to the Hanafi school. While taking about the *witr* prayer during his [program](#) on Huda tv, a certain Shaykh said:

"According to the Hanafi *madhab*, the prayer of *witr* is very much similar to the *maghrib* prayer.... In fact there is a specific hadith in which the Messenger (pbuh) forbade praying *witr* similar to the *maghrib*... We have Aisha (ra), Mother of the believers, who narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) prayed all three *rak'ahs* together without a middle *tashahhud*. Abdullah bin Omar (ra) narrated that Prophet used to pray *witr* as 2 *rak'ah* with *tashahhud* and *tasleem* (i.e., giving salam) and then prayed a single *rak'ah* (*witr*) by itself.... Our righteous predecessors explained that praying *witr* [the Hanafi way] as 2 *rak'ah* plus *tashahhud* plus another *rak'ah* is not acceptable or at least it is disliked (*makrooh*). The valid view, I am not saying the more valid view¹⁴, the valid view is the way of the majority of the scholars (*jumhoor*)".

Another Huda tv Shaykh made similar statements [here](#).

What evidence do the Hanafi scholars use? Here is some of what Al-Allama al-Othmani said in his magnificent work I'ila Al-Sunan where he included several Hadith from Aisha (ra) and others describing the *witr* of the Prophet (pbuh). ([I'ila al-Sunan 6/28](#))

13 **Mutawatir** hadith is conveyed by narrators so numerous at every stage of transmission that their sheer numbers obviate the possibility of forgery or alteration. Hereafter it is referred to as "unanimously authentic".

14 Look at this disgusting, appalling and ugly arrogance!!! He says, in no uncertain terms, that the Hanafi way is INVALID. If you continue reading, dear reader, you will see that what made this "Shaykh" so sure of himself is not knowledge but lack thereof.

Hadith #1:

“[It has been narrated] from Aisha (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) did not say salam after the two rak’ah of witr”. This is narrated by al-Nasai [1:248] and he did not make any remarks [regarding its authenticity]. In the book called “Athaar al-Sunan [2:11]” the chain of this hadith is described as **authentic** (*isnaduhu saheeh*). Al-Hakim narrates this hadith in his al-Mustadrak [1:204] as “[Aisha (ra)] said: **The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) did not say salam after the first two rak’ah in witr**”. Al-Hakim said “**This is an authentic hadith** satisfying the conditions of both Bukhari and Muslim (*hadha hadithun saheeh ala shart al-shaykhayn*)”. **Al-Dhahabi agreed with al-Hakim** in his “Talkhees” and said [the hadith is authentic] **satisfying the conditions of Bukhari and Muslim** (*ala shartihima*).

Hadith #2:

On the authority of Aisha (ra) who said: “**The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) use to pray witr as three rak’ah. He did not say salam except at the end (i.e. after the 3rd rak’ah)**”. This is narrated by al-Hakim [1:204]. He used this hadith as evidence and said: “This is how Omar bin Al-Khattab (ra) used to pray *witr* and the people of Madina pray according to his *witr*”. Al-Dhahabi did not remark regarding the authenticity of this hadith in his “Talkhees” [which means it is] **fair** (*hasan*) [according to al-Dhahabi]. It was also narrated by al-Zaylai in his Nasb al-Raya with the words “he did not say salam (*la yusallim*)”. In the same way al-Hafidz (Ibn Hajar) quotes this hadith in his al-Dirayah [114] with the words “he did not say salam except at the very end (*la yusallim illa fi akhirihinna*)”. Both of them (al-Zaylai and Ibn Hajar) quoted this hadith from al-Hakim.

Athar #3:

Al-Hasan al-Basri was told: **Ibn Omar (ra) used to say salam after two rak’ah of witr. He [al-Hasan] said “Omar (ra) was more knowledgeable than him [Ibn Omar] and he [Omar] used to get up for the 3rd rak’ah with takbir [without saying salam after two rak’ahs]”**. This is narrated by al-Hakim in al-Mustadrak [1:304] both al-Hakim and al-Dhahabi did not make any remarks regarding the authenticity of this athar.

Hadith #4:

On the authority of Abdullah bin abi Qays who said “**I asked Aisha (ra) how many rak’ah was the witr of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)? She said: He used to pray four plus three, six plus three, eight plus three or ten plus three. He did not pray more than thirteen or less than seven**”. This hadith is narrated by [Imaam] Ahmad, Abu Dawood and al-Tahawi and **its chain is fair** (*isnadoho hasan*) as in Athaar al-Sunan [2:11].

Regarding this hadith, the author of I’la al-Sunan (Al-Othmani) says: “This hadith provides clear evidence that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to pray *witr* as *three rak’ah* since Aisha (ra) says “four plus three, six plus three etc.” If the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said salam after the two *rak’ah* of *witr*, then we would expect Aisha (ra) to say “The messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to pray *witr* as six plus one, eight plus one, ten plus one or twelve plus one”. The fact that every time she mentioned *three rak’ah* means that he (pbuh) used not to say salam after two *rak’ah* of *witr*[, rather he used to pray *witr* as three *rak’ah* with one salam at the end].

Hadith #5:

On the authority of Omra from Aisha (ra) “**That the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to pray witr as three rak’ah where he would read in the first rak’ah “al-Ala”, in the second rak’ah “al-Kaafiroon” and in the third rak’ah “al-Ikhlās, al-Falaq and al-Naas**”. This hadith is narrated by Al-Daraqutni, Al-Tahawi and al-Hakim who declared it **authentic** (*sahhahahu*) as in Athaar al-Sunan[2:21]. Al-Hafidz [ibn Hajar] said in “al-Talkhees al-khabeer [3:118]”: “Al-Uqayli said **its chain is without a problem** (*isnaduhu saalih*) however the narration of Ibn Abbas(ra) and Ubay bin Ka’b (ra) without [the recitation of] al-Falaq and al-Naas [in the third *rak’ah*] is **more authentic**. Ibn al-Jawzi “said that [Imaam] Ahmad and Yahya bin Ma’een did not accept ‘al-Falaq and al-Naas’ being part of the authentic hadith”

Regarding this hadith, the author of I'ila al-Sunan (Al-Othmani) says: The statement "used to pray *witr* as three" indicates that he (pbuh) use to pray **three rak'ah with one salam**.

Hadith #6

Abu al-Nadr narrated to us saying Muhammed (i.e., Ibn Rashid) related on the authority of Yazeed bin Ya'far from Hasan al-Basri from Said bin Hisham from Aisha (ra) **"That the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to enter the house, once he prayed Isha, and pray two rak'ah. Then, he used to pray two more rak'ah that were longer and he would finish the prayer with an additional rak'at without a break between the second two rak'ah and the last one."** This hadith is narrated by [Imaam] Ahmad and its chain is deemed [reliable] (mu'tabar bihi). [See I'ila al-Sunan 6/34 for more detail].

Regarding this hadith, the author of I'ila al-Sunan (Al-Othmani) says: "The hadith of Abu al-Nadr provides clear evidence that he would pray **three rak'ahs** of *witr* together [without saying salam after the first two rak'ah].

Hadith #7:

On the authority of Abi Slama bin Abdurrahman who asked Aisha (ra) about the night vigil prayer (*al-tahajjud*) of the Messenger of Allah (ra) in Ramadan. She (ra) said: **"The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) did not pray more than 11 rak'ahs neither in Ramadan nor outside Ramadan. He would pray 4 long and wonderful rak'ahs. He would pray another 4 long and wonderful rak'ahs. Then he would pray three rak'ahs."** This hadith is narrated by Bukhari [1:154] and Muslim [1:254]

The author of I'ila al-Sunan (Al-Othmani) says: The saying of Aisha (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to pray four, followed by four followed by three proves, as the ahadith quoted earlier, that in the collection of narrations of Aisha (ra), the *witr* prayer is prayed as **three rak'ah** connected with one salam at the end. [See I'ila al-Sunan 6/34-35 for more detail].

Hadith #8:

As for the narration of Abu Slama and Abdurrahmaan al-A'araj on the authority of Abu Huraira as a raised hadith (*marfoo'an*): **"Don't pray *witr* as three, pray it as five or seven and don't make it look like the *maghrib* prayer"**. This hadith is narrated by al-Daraqutni, Al-Hakim and al-Bayhaqi. Al-Hafidz [ibn Hajar] said that it is **authentic** satisfying the conditions of Bukhari and Muslim. [[See I'ila al-Sunan 6/36 for additional narrations].

The author of I'ila al-Sunan (Al-Othmani, 6/36) says: "The above hadith (and those of the similar narrations) do not mean that praying *witr* as three *rak'ah* is forbidden period. How can it be? Praying *witr* as three *rak'ah* has been narrated with authentic chains from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) as statement (*qawlan*) and as practice (*fi'lan*). In addition, as we will see later, the companions as well as the four imams reached a consensus regarding the permissibility of *witr* as three *rak'ah*. Though they differed regarding the permissibility of *witr* less than or more than three *rak'ah*. The meaning of the above hadith is that one should not pray *witr* alone [three *rak'ah*] without praying either 2, 4 or more optional rak'as before it. Al-Qastalani said "It is better to pray with one *tashahhud* than praying it with two *tashahhuds*". I [al-Othmani] would say that this interpretation is extremely absurd unsupported by any evidence (*ba'eed ghayat al-bu'd*). This wouldn't occur to anyone rather it is a clear mistake. This is because his statement **"Don't pray *witr* as three, pray it as five, seven or nine"** clearly talks about the number of *rak'ahs*. There is no evidence in this hadith to the number of *tashahhud* whatsoever neither implicitly nor explicitly. The meaning is, as we said, that it is disliked to pray *witr* alone without praying an optional prayer before. A similar statement can be found in al-ta'leeq al-Hasan [2:13]. Those who say that one can pray *witr* as a single *rak'ah* cannot use the above hadith against those who say that *witr* is three *rak'ah* since there is no mention of *witr* as a single *rak'ah* in this hadith. Rather, the apparent meaning of this hadith is that, after forbidding *witr* as three *rak'ah*, it orders *witr* as five, seven or more. Those who deny the permissibility of *witr* as three *rak'ah* must then say based on this hadith that one must pray *witr* five *rak'ah* or more but no one [worth the name] says that."

These are some of the evidences used by Hanafi scholars. Based on the above research of al-Othmani, we have several questions for the preachers of Huda tv:

Question #1:

You said:

“Aisha (ra) Mother of the believers narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) prayed all three *rak'ahs* together without a middle tashahhud.”

Al-Othamni (may Allah have mercy on him) collected several narrations from Aisha (ra) none of which mentions explicitly that Prophet (pbuh) prayed *witr* without a middle tashahhud as you claim. Could you tell us where your version of the hadith is and narrated by whom? If you find that the hadith is not narrated with those words and that they are your interpretation, presented unfortunately as if they are part of the hadith, will you make a well publicized program on Huda tv informing your viewers that you were wrong?

Question #2:

You said:

“In fact there is a specific hadith in which the Messenger (pbuh) forbade praying *witr* similar to the *maghrib*.”

You narrated the last part of the hadith and ignored the beginning. Here is (a version of) the full hadith:

Abu Salama and Abdurrahmaan al-A'araj narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira as a raised hadith (*marfoo'an*): “Don't pray *witr* as three, pray it as five or seven and don't make it look like the *maghrib* prayer”.

You used the latter part of the hadith to support your view that the *witr* should not be prayed like *maghrib* yet you completely ignored the beginning of the hadith where it says “Don't pray *witr* as three”. How do you justify your view that one can pray *witr* as three *rak'ah* without a middle *tashahhud* when this hadith says not to pray *witr* as three *rak'ah*? How do you justify for yourself this behavior of taking part of the hadith that supports your view and leaving out the part that goes against it?

Betrayal of trust: You should have quoted the entire hadith and offered an explanation to the viewers informing them about which principle allows you to ignore the part of the hadith that contradicts your view while using the other part to support it. You quoted a hadith and made claims based on the hadith yet you did not give references so that we can check it to see if you are quoting the hadith or if you are mixing your own interpretation with the hadith.

Question #3:

How do you reconcile between this hadith and those of the above authentic narrations where the former forbids *witr* as three and the latter states that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) prayed *witr* as three *rak'ah*?

Question #4:

You said:

“Our righteous predecessors explained that praying *witr* [the Hanafi way] as 2 *rak'ah* plus *tashahhud* plus another *rak'ah* is not acceptable or at least it is disliked (*makrooh*). The valid view, I am not saying the more valid view, the valid view is the way of the majority of the scholars (*jumhoor*)”.

Within a few minutes, you contradicted yourself three times. First you said that praying *witr* the Hanafi way is not acceptable, then you said it is disliked and then you said it is not valid.

Could you tell us who among your “righteous predecessors” said the Hanafi way was not acceptable? Please give references!

Hanafi scholars use, among others, the above eight hadith to support their view. Could you tell us by what authority you declare the Hanafi way invalid when they base their opinion on more than one authentic hadith?

Question #5:

Now that you know Hanafi scholars use several authentic hadith to support their view on this matter, will you make a public declaration that you were ignorant of the Hanafi proofs and that in future you will abstain from such baseless accusations without thorough research?

Question #6:

The Hanafi *madhab* is followed at least by half of this ummah. Billions of people will have rights on you including thousands of most knowledgeable scholars whose opinions you foolishly dismiss. Don't you fear Allah?

You see, dear reader, not only did Shaykh Al-Albani fail to stick to the following principle of his, but also his followers today also fail miserably as you saw in the above two examples:

Shaykh Al-Albani said: "I examine the positions of the Imams and their evidences for them, and then take the closest of them to the evidence of the Qur'an and Sunnah."

If such is the track record of the Shaykh himself and his "learned" followers, what about the delusional ordinary energetic young fellow who has an abridged version of Bukhari under his armpit and stops you at the threshold of the masjid after the prayer saying your action of such and such in prayer is wrong as there is a hadith in Bukhari that says such and such? You say, well I am following the *madhab* of Imaam Abu Hanifa for example. He says: Brother, Imaam Abu Hanifa said "If the hadith is authentic, it is my way" and so you should follow the authentic hadith in Bukhari as the Imaam orders you to do.

Doesn't the behavior of this young man remind you of the saying of Allah in Surat al-Kahf verse 104?

"Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were acquiring good by their works?"

Let us conclude this booklet by explaining the meaning of the saying "If the hadith is authentic, it is my way" which is attributed to the Imams.

What Did Imams Mean by "If the hadith is authentic, it is my way"

I have seen time and time again people taking this statement of the Imams out of context. Apparently, it was epidemic enough at the time of the eminent Hadith Master, Jurist, Shaykh al-Islam Muhyiddeen al-Nawawi al-Shafii (may Allah have mercy on his soul) that he addressed the question in the introduction of his masterpiece in 25 volumes called "Al-Majmoo' " which is worth its weight not in gold but in diamonds.

Al-Nawawi says (vol 1/105-106):

"It is true that Al-Shafii said 'if you find in my book what goes against the saying of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), leave my statement [aside] and give verdict according to the hadith'. Or he is reported to have said 'If my statement contradicts an authentic hadith, leave my verdict and act upon the hadith' or 'If my statement contradicts an authentic hadith, then the hadith becomes my way.'"

Al-Nawawi continues: "This statement of Al-Shafii doesn't mean that every Tom, Dick and Harry who comes across an authentic hadith can say this is the way of Al-Shafii and follows the literal meaning of the hadith. Al-Shafii was addressing those who reached a level of expertise whereby they are qualified to issue independent verdicts within the Shafii School (*mujtahid fi al-madhab*). The prerequisites of such an individual (*mujtahid*) have previously been listed. Once a qualified expert in the Shafii school (*mujtahid*) comes across a hadith that contradicts the statement of Al-Shafii, he must make sure that Al-Shafii never saw the particular hadith or that he wasn't aware of its authenticity [before he can replace Al-Shafii's verdict with the hadith]. How can someone fulfill the above condition unless and until he goes through the books of Al-Shafii, those of his students until he reads all the major books in Shafii School. Indeed this is a very tough condition and those who can fulfill this requirement are very few in number [among the specialists of the Shafii School let alone the ordinary people]. The reason for the above condition is that Al-Shafii did not act according to the literal meaning of many hadith that he saw and he knew. [The reason he did not act

upon them] is because he had evidence that indicated a defect in the hadith, or the hadith was abrogated (*mansookh*), or the hadith was applicable to a very specific context (*takhsees*), or his information supported a particular interpretation (*ta'weel*) of the hadith and the like..."

May Allah encircle Al-Nawawi in his mercy for he has done a beautiful job responding to the question. So, if one must go through the major books of a *madhab* (in addition to being a qualified scholar) before applying the above statement of the Imams, let us see what that would mean. I am going to list **some** of the major books of Hanafi school here but rest assured that the other three *madhabs* have just as many books.

Qur'anic Commentaries¹⁵ specifically elaborating on rulings derived from Qur'an:

1. *Ahkam al-Qur'an* by Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Musa ibn Yazdad al-Qummi al-Hanafi (d. 305 H)
2. *Ahkam al-Qur'an* by Abu Ja'far Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tahawi al-Hanafi (d. 321 H)
3. *Ahkam al-Qur'an* by Imam Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn 'Ali popularly known as al-Jassas al-Razi al-Hanafi (d. 370 H). Published in **3 Volumes**.
4. *Talkhis Ahkam al-Qur'an* by Shaykh Jamal al-Din Mahmud ibn Ahmad popularly known as Ibn al-Siraj al-Qunawi al-Hanafi (d. 770 H)
5. *Al-Tafsirat al-Ahmadiyyah* by Shaykh Ahmad al-Jonpuri al-Hindi al-Hanafi popularly known as Mulla Jiwan (d. 1130 H)
6. *Ahkam al-Qur'an* by Maulana Zafar Ahmad al-Usmani al-Tharvi and other Indian scholar under the guidance of Maulana Hakeem al-Ummah Ashraf Ali al-Tharvi. Published in **5 volumes**.
7. *Rawai' al-Bayan fi Tafsir Ayat al-Ahkam* by Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni al-Hanafi (Allah Al-mighty preserve him).

Books of Jurisprudence (*fiqh*). The authors discuss at great lengths the proofs and methodology for each and every ruling. [**134 volumes**]:

1. *Al-Mabsoot* by Shams al-Aimma Abu Shalin al-Sarakhsi¹⁶ (d. 490 H). Published in **30 Volumes**.
2. *Bada'i' al-Sanai' fi tarteeb al-Sharai'* by Malik al-Ulamaa Alauddeen al-Kasani (d. 587 H). Published in **10 Volumes**.
3. *Al-Hidaya Sharh bidayat al-Mubtadi'* by Shaykh al-Islam Burhanuddeen al-Marghinaani (d. 593 H). **5 Volumes** published as 2. This is already translated into English by Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee in 2 volumes.
4. *Al-Ikhtiyaar li Taa'leel al-Mukhtaar* by Imam Abdullah al-Mawsili (d. 683 H). **5 Volumes** publishes as 2.
5. *Tabyeen al-Haqaaq Sharh Kanz al-Daqaaiq* by Imaam Fakhruddeen al-Zaylai (d. 743 H). Published in **8 volumes**.
6. *Al-Binaya Sharh Al-Hidaya* by Al-Allama Al-Hafidz Al-Faqeeh Badruddeen al-Ayni (d. 855 H). Published in **13 volumes**.
7. *Fath al-Qadeer Sharh al-Hidaaya* by Al-Imaam al-Humaam al-Muhaqqiq Al-Faqeeh Al-Usooly Al-Ka-maal bin Al-Humaam (d. 861 H). Published in **10 Volumes**.
8. *Al-Bahr al-Raaq Sharh Kanz al-Daqaaiq* by Al-Imaam Al-Usooly Ibn Nujaim Al-Hanafi (d.970 H).

15 There are many general Qur'anic commentaries written by Hanafi scholars. For example:

- *Ta'veelaat ahl al-Sunnah* by Abu Mansoor Al-Maturidi. Published in 10 Volumes. The author (may Allah have mercy on him) is one of the Imams of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah in *aqida* (creed) and hence his commentary is an excellent resource for *aqida*. He authored on the subject of creed a book called "*Kitaab al-Tawheed*" that is also published.
- *Al-Kashshaf* by Al-Zamakhshari. Published in 5 Large Volumes.
- *Tafsir al-Nasafi* by Imaam al-Nasafi. Published in 2 Large Volumes.
- *Tafseer al-Samaqandi* by Abu al-Layth al-Smarqandi. Published in 3 large volumes.
- *Tafseer Aby Suud* by Shaykh al-Islam Abu al-Suud Efendi. Published in 6 volumes.
- *Safwat al-Tafaseer* by Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni. Published in 3 volumes.

16 Imam al-Sarakhsi is known as Shams al-Aimma (the star of the scholars). This is a lofty title indeed but when you find out that he dictated the entire 30 volumes while in prison to his students just outside the prison totally from memory without any reference books, you say Glory be to Him Who bestowed upon our scholars these tremendous abilities to preserve for us our religion. May Allah encircle Imam Al-Sarakhsi and other scholars with His mercy. Ameen!

Published in **9 volumes**.

9. *Sharh al-Laknawi ala l-Hidaya* by Bahr al-Uloom al-Allama al-Muhaqqiq Al-Muhaddith Al-Faqeeh Abdulhayy Al-Laknawi (d.1304 H) Published in **8 volumes**.
10. *Radd al-Mukhtaar ala al-durr al-mukhtaar* by Al-Allama Khatimat al-Muhaqqiqeen Muhammed Emeen ibn Aabideen (d. 1253 H). Published in **14 volumes**.
11. *It'la al-Sunaan* by Maulana al-Allama al-Muhaddith al-Faqeeh al-Muhaqqiq Zafar Ahmad al-USmani al-Thanvi (d. 1394 H). Published in **22 volumes**.

Here is a partial list of commentaries on the hadith collections written by the Hanafi scholars. These are the books you would go to if you want to know what the Hanafi point of view is for a given Hadith of the Prophet (God bless him and grant him peace) [**110 volumes**]:

1. *Umdat al-Qaari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhari* by Al-Allama Al-Hafidz Al-Faqeeh Badruddeen al-Ayni (d. 855 H). Published in **25 volumes**.
2. *Ftah al-Mulhim Sharh Saheeh Muslim* by Allama Shabbir Usmani (1369 H) and Muhammad Taqi Usmani (hafidzahullah). Published in **12+6 volumes**.
3. *Awjaz al-Masalik Ila Muwatta Malik* by Shaikhul Hadith Maulana Muhammad Zakariyyah Kandhalvi (d. 1982 M). Published in **16 volumes**.
4. *Sharh Sunan Abi Daawood* by Al-Allama Al-Hafidz Al-Faqeeh Badruddeen al-Ayni (d. 855 H). Published in **7 volumes**.
5. *Awn al-Maabud Sharh Sunan Abi Dawood* by Allam Sharaf al-Haqq al-Adzeemabadi (d. 1329 H) Published in **15 volumes**.
6. *Al-'Urf al Shadhi Sharh Sunan Al-Tirmidhi* by al-Allam Al-Muhaddith al-Faqeeh Anwar Shah al-Kashmiri (d. 1933 H). Published in **5 volumes**.
7. *Sarh Sunan Ibn Maja* by Al-Hafidz Abdullah Alauddeen Moghultay al-Hanafi (d. 762 H). Published in **5 volumes**.
8. *Mirqaat al-Mafaatih Sharh Mishkaat al-Masabih* by Al-Allama Mulla Ali Al-Qari (d. 1014 H). Published in **12 volumes**.
9. *Maarif al-Sunaan Sharh Sunaan al-Tirmidhi* by Muhammed Yusf bin al-Husayn al-Bannuri al-Hindi (d. 1397 H). Published in **6 volumes**.
10. *Injah al-Haja Sharh Sunan Ibn Maja* by Muhammad Abdulghani Al-Mujaddidi al-Dahlawi (d. 1273 H). Published in **one large volume**.
11. *Al-Taaliq al-Mumajjad ala Muwatta Muhammaed* by Bahr al-Uloom al-Allama al-Muhaqqiq Al-Muhaddith Al-Faqeeh Abdulhayy Al-Laknawi (d.1304 H) Published in **3 volumes**.

Books dedicated to the Analysis of the authenticity of hadith used in Hanafi texts [**9 volumes**]:

1. *Nasb al-Raya takhrij ahadith al-Hidaya* by Al-Hafidz Jamaluddeen al-Zaylai (d. 762 H). Published in **5 volumes** with an introduction by Al-Allama Al-Faqeeh Al-Muhaddith Al-USuli Al-Naqid Sayfuallah al-Maslool al-Imaam Muhammed Zahid al-Kawtahri.
2. *Al-Ta'reef wa al-Ikhbaar bi Takhreej ahadith al-Ikhtiyar* by Al-Hafidz Qasim bin Qutlubogha Al-Hanafi (d. 879 H). Published in **one volume**.
3. *Takhreej ahadith Usool al-Bazdawi* by Al-Hafidz Qasim bin Qutlubogha Al-Hanafi (d. 879 H). Published in **one volume**.
4. *Takhrij ahadith al-Kashshaaf* by Al-Hafidz Jamaluddeen al-Zaylai (d. 762 H). Published in **2 volumes**.

Books that list the verdicts without the proofs [**9 volumes**]:

1. *Al-Fatawa al Hindiyya (aka Al-Fatawa al-Alemgeeriyya)* by a committee of Indian scholars under the leadership of al-Shaykh Nidzaam. Published in **6 volumes**.
2. *Fatawa Qadikhan* by Fakhruddeen Hasan bin Ali Al-Ozjandi al-Farqhani. Published in **3 volumes**.

What I have just listed is 250+ volumes of the Hanafi books. A Salafi who is faithful to the principle of Shakh Al-Albani, would have to page through 1000+ volumes (assuming at least 250+ volumes per *madhab*) plus sort through a quarter of a million hadith spread across 300+ books¹⁷ and then come

17 Musnad of Imaam Ahmad alone has about 40 thousand hadith.

to a conclusion. Inevitably, he will run into multiple ahadith whose apparent meaning might not be aligned in a given subject. In this case, one has to follow the steps of choosing one hadith over another. This point is treated by Al-Hafidz al-Iraqi in his commentary on the *Muqddima* of *Ibn Al-Salah* under the title *Al-Murajjihaat*¹⁸. He states on page 245 that there are 110 steps in deciding between two hadith if the reconciliation is not possible. He (may Allah have mercy on him) takes the trouble and lists all 110 steps one after another taking five pages. For the promoters of the anti-madhabism, the first step is to see if one hadith is in Bukhari or Muslim and the other is not. We want to know what this giant of Hadith Science Al-Hafidz al-Iraqi has to say about this. He says:

الثاني بعد المنة: كون احدها اتفق عليه الشيخان

Step Number 102: One of the two hadith is narrated by Bukhari and Muslim (*muttafaq alayhi*).

You can already see that the anti-madhabists put the cart in front of the horse. Instead of going through all the steps, they take a shortcut and jump to step 102 ignoring all the steps before and after¹⁹. If you take the trouble to read the steps²⁰ that Al-Hafidz al-Iraqi (may Allah have mercy on

18 Steps for choosing one hadith over another.

19 Al-Hafidz Al-Iraqi (may Allah have mercy on him) says that the steps are listed in order of priority (ala al-wala). This is confirmed by Al-Shaykh Al-Allama Al-Muhaqqiq Al-Faqeeh Al-Muhaddith Abdulfattah Abu Ghudda in his lecture on youtube called *حاجة الأمة إلى الفقهاء والأئمة*. He (may Allah have mercy on him) said explicitly not to make step number 102 into step number 1. You can listen the lecture [here](#) (starting from 24:30).

20 Here are most of the steps listed by Al-Hafidz Al-Iraqi. I highly recommend that you read these steps at least once to have an appreciation for the tremendous effort it takes to decide between the two hadith if one follows the way of the great scholars of this Umma. Compare this with Al-Khajandi's way of deciding between the two hadith. You cannot help but ask yourself if Al-Khajandi came from Mars for he has no connection to the Islamic scholarship. **[Caution: I am including some of these steps just for information. They are not intended to serve as a guide for anyone to decide between the two hadith. This task is reserved for Hadith Experts and Jurists].**

1. Number of chains (*kathrat al-ruwah*).
2. Narrator of one of the hadith has more expertise (*atqan*) and greater mastery of hadith (*ahfadz*).
3. The trustworthiness of the narrators of one of the hadith is agreed upon.
4. That the narrator was an adult at the time he received the hadith.
5. One of them received the hadith through *tahdith* (audition of the narration of the teacher) and the other through *ard* (presentation or reciting the hadith in the presence of the teacher).
6. One of them received the hadith through *sema'an* (audition) or *ardan* (presentation) and the other through *kitabatan* (writing), *munawalatan* (having an explicit or metaphoric license for the narration from the teacher) *wijadatan* (narrating from a book without hearing from a teacher or having received a license).
7. The narrator is relating from the original source.
8. The narrator is relating that which involves himself.
9. ..
10. The narrator is closer to the Prophet (pbuh) at time of reception of the hadith.
11. The narrator shadowed his teacher more.
12. The narrator heard the hadith from the scholars of his own country or locality.
13. One of the hadith has been analyzed by many (*kawni ahad al-hadithayni lahu makhaarij*).
14. One of the hadith has a *Hijazi* chain (i.e., narrators are from *Hijaz*).
15. Narrators of the hadith are from a school (or locality) that don't tolerate misrepresentation (*tadlees*).
16. The hadith is narrated with keywords that indicated that chain is intact such as "I heard (*sa-mi'tu*)" or "he transmitted to us (*haddathana*)".
17. That the narrator took the hadith from his teacher in person while seeing him.
18. That there is no disagreement regarding the hadith.
19. That the narrators did not interpolate anything in to the text.
20. There is unanimous agreement that the hadith is raised (*muttafaq ala rafi'hi*).
21. There is unanimous agreement that the chain is intact (*muttafaq ala ittisalihi*).
22. That the narrators of the hadith do not permit narration by meaning.
23. That the narrator is a jurist (*faqeeh*).
24. That the narrator is an author of an oft-referred reference book [in Hadith].
25. One of the hadith pertain to the subject at hand directly and literally (*nassan wa qawlan*) while the other hadith requires analysis and derivation (*istidlalalan wa ijtihaadan*).
26. That the hadith contains statement accompanied by action or practice.
27. That the hadith is in agreement with the evident meaning of the Qur'an.

28. That the hadith is in agreement with the other established prophetic traditions.
29. That the hadith is in agreement with legal analogy (*qiyas*).
30. That the hadith is supported by other loose (*mursal*) or interrupted (*munqati'*) hadith.
31. That the four rightly guided Caliphs (ra) acted upon the hadith.
32. That the Muslim nation (*ummah*) as a whole acts upon it.
33. The ruling contained in the hadith is explicitly expressed (*mantooq*).
34. The text of the hadith is self-explanatory (*mustaqillan*) and there is no need to estimate an omission (*idmaar*).
35. The ruling of one hadith is linked (*maqroonan*) to (bi) an adjective (*sifatin*) and the other with the noun (*al-ismi*).
36. The [ruling found in the] hadith is linked (or narrated) with the interpretation of the narrator.
37. One hadith contains the ruling as a statement (*qawlan*) and the other as a practice (*fi'lan*). The former is preferred.
38. There is no room for specialization (*lam yadkhulhu al-takhsees*).
39. That the hadith does not contain any sign of offence for the Companions (ra).
40. [The ruling of] one hadith is absolute (*mutlaq*) and the other is linked to a reason (*sabab*).
41. In one case derived word is used but not the other (*kawn al-ishtiqaaq yadullu alayhi doon al-aakhar*).
42. One of the two disputants [of the story contained in the narration] is relating the story.
43. One of the hadith contains additional information (*ziyada*).
44. ...
45. One of the hadith has a similar narration whose ruling is agreed upon.
46. One of them indicate prohibition (*tahreem*) the other permissibility (*ibaaha*).
47. One of the results in a ruling that is in accordance with the secret law and this is preferred over the second one but some said they are equal.
48. ..
49. ..
50. The two hadith are regarding judgment (*aqdiyyah*) and one of them is narrated by Ali (ra) or regarding inheritance (*faraaid*) and one of them is narrated by Zayd (ra) or regarding the permissible and prohibited (*halaal* and *haram*) and one of them was narrated by Muadh (ra) and so on. The correct way of selecting, that is adapted by most, is this.
51. One of them has shorter chain (*a'ala sanadan*).
52. Narrator is knowledgeable in Arabic (*aliman bi al-arabiyya*).
53. Narrator is a linguist (*aliman bi al-lugha*).
54. Narrator is better in jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Arabic (*arabiyya*) or language (*lugha*),
55. Narrator has the correct creed (*hasan al-'itiqaad*).
56. Narrator is highly God-conscience (*wari'an*).
57. Narrator frequented the Hadith scholars in particular and Islamic scholars in general.
58. One frequented more (*akthar majalisatan lahum*).
59. The trustworthiness of one is known through practical experience and the other through a testimonial or through examinations of his narrations.
60. One has testimonial from someone who not only relates his narration but also puts in practice while the other gives testimony but only relates it without practicing it.
61. One has a testimonial of trustworthiness with supporting evidence.
62. The narrator is a male.
63. The narrator is not a slave.
64. The fame of the narrator (*shohrat al-raawi*).
65. The fame of the lineage of the narrator.
66. That there is no confusion regarding the narrator's name.
67. The narrator with a single name is preferred over the one with two or more names.
68. The narrators has more praises (or testimonials in his favor).
69. The narrator is praised by many experts.
70. The narrator had a good memory until the end of his life and mix-up (*ikhtilaat*) has not been reported about him.
71. The companion who is narrating the hadith accept Islam late. Some said it is the opposite. Al-Amidi settled for the latter.
72. The narrator is one of the senior companions.
73. If the ruling contained in the hadith is specific (*khass*), it [is preferred that the hadith] is narrated with context and background, if it is a general ruling, it [is preferred that the hadith] is narrated without a context or background.
74. The narration makes explicit mention of the Messenger (pbuh).
75. ...
76. The narrator is well aware of the lofty status of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).
77. One of the narrators is from Medina the other is from Mecca.

him) listed, you will quickly realize that in order to go through them, one has to scan hundreds of volumes of biographies (*al-taraajim*) of which almost none is available in any language other than Arabic and some of these books are not printed but handwritten and copies are preserved in the libraries of centers of learning around the world such as Mecca, Medina, Istanbul, Cairo, Damascus, Laknaw etc. Common Muslims will not have access to some of these books anytime soon. In other words, this is a tremendous undertaking.

Do you wonder anymore why Salafis themselves don't live up to the standard that they set up for others? This is an impossible task for a full blown scholar let alone a young graduate of a four year college or an ordinary Muslim.

From the time of the birth of the *madhabs* around the second century until now, an overwhelming majority of the Umma (Muslim nation) has been following them. In fact, for hundreds of years, there was not a single Scholar worth the name except that he belonged to one of the *madhabs* including Al-Shaykh Ibn Taymiyya and his most famous student Ibn Al-Qayyim who were both followers of the Hanbali school.

Our Salafi brothers are free to follow whatever way or methodology they like. We just wish that they would leave the *madhab* followers alone at the time the Umma is in dire need of unity. The enemies of Islam have already enough tools that they use to divide us. Let us not, for the sake of Allah, be of those who cause division in the name of Islam.

We must recognize the tremendous effort exhorted by the Imams and their followers to sort through all the evidences and boil the information down for us into a set of simple rules to follow. They deserve our supplication day and night. May Allah reward them with gardens under which rivers flow. Ameen!

I would like to finish by attempting to answer the question that I posed at the beginning of the booklet:

-
78. ..
 79. ..
 80. ..
 81. ..
 82. One of the hadith is eloquent (*faseeh*) and the other is not.
 83. ..
 84. The wording is explicit (*haqiqi*).
 85. The wording is metaphorical (*shibhu haqiqi*).
 86. One of them is Islamic reality and the other is the customary reality or linguistic reality.
 87. One of them contains customary reality the other is linguistic reality.
 88. One can derive the ruling from the hadith in two different ways.
 89. One can derive the ruling directly.
 90. Points to the reason behind the ruling.
 91. ..
 92. It contains a threat.
 93. [One of them contains] a stronger threat.
 94. One of the narrations is less likely to be misunderstood.
 95. ..
 96. ..
 97. The ruling is emphasized with repetition.
 98. One of them is direct (*mafهوم al-mawafaq*) the other is by insinuation (*mafهوم al-mukhalaf*).
 99. ..
 100. One is narrated by a chain and the other is quoted from a known book or vice versa.
 101. One of them is quoted from a known book and the other is a famous hadith (*mashoor*).
 102. One of the two hadith is narrated by Bukhari and Muslim (*muttafaq alayhi*).
 103. ..
 104. ..
 105. ..

“If the Salafis themselves do not strictly follow the *daleel*, then why do they call the madhab followers to their way under the slogan of “Follow the *Daleel* from Qur’an and Sunna!”?

I believe that the Salafi slogan of “Follow the *Daleel* from Quran and Sunnah” is used or abused (inadvertently or not) to sever the link we Muslims have with the four great schools of thought. Without a common thread, we don’t have a leg to stand on and we become vulnerable to manipulative sharks who would wish to steer our youth to devilish fanatic groups like ISIS. A Muslim, who adheres to one of the *madhabs*, will have the correct understanding of the Islamic creed and will not be lured with empty slogans by the wolves in sheep’s clothing.

All praise is due to Allah and may His peace and blessings be upon our master Muhammed, upon his family, his companions and upon those who follow in his footsteps until the day of judgment. Ameen!